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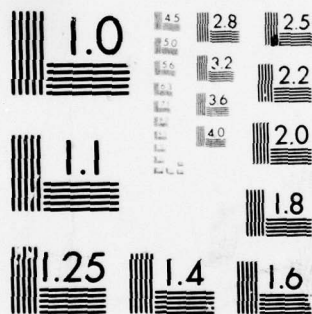
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SOVIET AND AMERICAN STRATEGIC DOCTRINES: ONE MORE TIME

James McConnell

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SOVIET AND AMERICAN STRATEGIC DOCTRINES:
ONE MORE TIME

In recent years, in connection with the SALT debate and concern over the implications of emerging Soviet capabilities, there has been a revival of interest in comparing Soviet and American doctrines. In spite of the sharpness of these Western discussions, there is a certain consensus among the participants, as to both doctrinal similarities and doctrinal differences. All seem to agree that war is not regarded as an expedient policy by either Moscow or Washington, and that the common objective is the peacetime political manipulation of force (deterrence, bargaining from a position of strength, etc.). The participants also ^{→ it seems →} seem to agree that, while Washington aims at "deterrence" through the ability to inflict "unacceptable damage," Moscow (at least as a matter of declaratory policy) has opted for a "war-prevention" doctrine based on the ability to "fight" and "win" a nuclear conflict. Controversy in the discussion is primarily a matter of emphasis. ^{→ next paragraph} One strand of thought stresses the similarities and offers a less ominous interpretation of the differences; the other focuses on doctrinal asymmetries, considers them of

profound negative import for Western interests, and insists on a competitive U.S. response.

It is not my objective in this paper to pronounce on these two positions or to mediate between them. The concern, rather, is whether we are not being led astray by an exclusive focus on only two doctrinal aspects -- U.S. deterrence and Soviet war-prevention. My thesis is that the U.S. has not been alone in having a purely punitive deterrence doctrine; the USSR has had one, too, and for some time. Nor, on the other hand, is the USSR alone in having a war-prevention doctrine. I am not referring here to the emerging U.S. nuclear counterforce option, though this has to be taken into consideration. Rather, the reference is to the long-standing U.S. conventional and tactical-nuclear options, which (almost by definition) aim at preventing war through combat capabilities rather than the threat of punishment. The damage these options can inflict are not considered sufficiently great, so that the calculus has to be made in terms of preserving benefits through denying an opponent his political objectives.

Thus, expansion of the framework of discussion seems to bring to view a greater range of similarities. At the same time, it exposes more differences. First, the USSR does seem to have a doctrine of deterrence

based upon assured-destruction criteria but at least until recently, unlike that of the U.S., it has not been a doctrine of mutual deterrence through the mutual ability to inflict unacceptable damage. In other words, while Moscow feels that Washington is deterred from initiating all-out nuclear war, it has refused (again, until recently) to acknowledge similar restraints upon itself. There was full recognition that losses would be appalling; there was no recognition that the game is so unworthy of the candle that the question of victory or defeat is idle.

A second and equally fundamental doctrinal difference crops up on the war-prevention side. Both superpowers do have a war-prevention (as distinct from a deterrence) doctrine, but the U.S. version is predicated preferentially on the ability to fight a conventional war, the Soviet version on the ability to fight a nuclear war (until the 1970s, even an all-out nuclear war). The U.S. objective is to prevent a conventional attack or provocative action that will compel it to initiate conventional operations. The Russians want to inhibit "war," but are wary of specifying unequivocally the type of conflict suspected of being the real target -- i.e., conventional war, the same as in the U.S. case, though approached by different means.

We now have the salient range of symmetries and asymmetries that require further treatment in this paper. Both superpowers have aimed at detering all-out nuclear war through the threat of intolerable misery rather than the combat denial of an objective. However, the Soviet method of preventing "war" (presumably conventional war) has been founded on the ability to fight, not at the conventional level of American choice, but at the higher nuclear level, to which Moscow itself would logically have to escalate -- hence the reluctance, especially pronounced in the 1960's, to espouse some equivalent of the U.S. "mutual deterrence" formula. Washington is deterred from initiating strategic nuclear war; Moscow is not, provided its initiative is in response to a limited Western attack. This is admittedly a different picture than is ordinarily presented, but one arrives at it with as much confidence as can probably ever be gained in these matters, provided the problem is examined dynamically, in the interactions between doctrines at all levels, horizontally and vertically, rather than statically, level by level, in isolation.

How do we account for the doctrinal asymmetries? Many explanations have been offered, from factors deeply rooted in history, culture, ideology and geography, to the Soviet military's institutional chauvinism, lags in

the Russian learning curve and, in a different direction, the failure of Americans to appreciate the fundamentals of politico-military effectiveness. Curiously enough, no one seems to have focused on the explanation that strikes me as crucial -- relative capabilities at various rungs of the escalation ladder, as perceived by superpower policy-makers, who have then drawn more or less "rational" conclusions. I would not want to suggest that other factors have no bearing. Still Occam's razor ought to be kept sharp, and there is no use multiplying hypotheses when one alone seems adequate to account for the fundamentals. So compatible is the capabilities explanation with the situation as we know it, that one would almost anticipate a swap of doctrines, however differently expressed in their new homes, to follow on an exchange of forces and overall military potentials.

Soviet Deterrence Doctrine

It is acknowledged on all sides that the U.S. has an assured-destruction deterrence doctrine, but while many suspect that the USSR has such a doctrine, it is yet to be generally recognized that one can be plausibly derived from declaratory evidence. In view of the notorious Russian reluctance to clarify terms in sensi-

tive matters, I am not surprised to find only one effort on their part to define the word "deterrence." Still, it is unexceptionable from a Western standpoint. Captain 1st Rank Solnyshkov, reputedly on the faculty of one of the higher naval schools, wrote as follows in 1968:¹

The armed forces are intended for achieving definite objectives, flowing from state policy.

One such objective in particular is the deterrence (sderzhivanie) of a potential opponent. In certain circumstances, this objective can be achieved by the creation of powerful strike forces, capable in a retaliatory strike of inflicting on an enemy damage that, in his view, is unacceptable.

This might be only one man's definition, but actual usage suggests otherwise. Whereas Soviet military doctrine has consistently maintained that "victory" in war can only be attained by the joint operations of all branches of the armed forces,² there was already in the first half of the 1960s a tendency to assign primacy in "deterrence" to the punitive power of nuclear weapons and, moreover, to make these weapons the key factor in "national-defense capabilities" and "deterrence" the central criterion of a successful "national defense" (oborona strany). John Erickson, among others, has observed this assimilation of deterrence into national defense, but wrongly concludes from it that deterrence, in Moscow's view, hangs on war-waging capabilities.³ Not

only does this ignore the association of deterrence with nuclear weapons, as opposed to the "combat capabilities of the armed forces" as a whole; it also does not quite do justice to the evolving complexities in the Soviet understanding of "national defense."

Much of Soviet military terminology is highly structured, all the more so when it seems to reflect a bureaucratic rather than a purely analytic reality; for the Soviet bureaucratic god is an unusually jealous one. There are two hornbook categories, each with its own specialized attendant terminology, that are continually invoked and should never be confused: the "general system of national defense" on the one hand; and the "combat system of the armed forces" on the other.⁴ The former is the special province of the "military-policy leadership of the state," i.e., the Defense Council, the latter the special province of the "strategic leadership of the armed forces," embodied in what used to be (and may still be) designated as the Higher Military Council (in wartime, the Stavka of the Supreme High Command). As a consequence, whereas the combat system of the armed forces, which generates the "combat might of the armed forces", has for long been interested in force as an instrument of military strategy for waging the "armed struggle" in war, the system of national defense, which

generates the "defense (or military) might of the state," examines this same force from the standpoint of "its ability to be an instrument of policy," both in peace and war.⁵

Erickson is right in that, traditionally, the peacetime political use of force was predicated on the state's war-waging capabilities;⁶ in the prenuclear era there was no other alternative. However, since the early 1960's the Soviets, while not entirely giving up the prenuclear concept, have displayed a tendency to emphasize the centrality of "strategic nuclear forces," rather than the armed forces as a whole, in "detering" world nuclear war, and it is this element of "state military might," they declare, which primarily ensures the "national defense." Thus, according to General-Colonel Lomov in 1963, "a mighty factor detering the aggressive ambitions of imperialist circles is the defense might of the Soviet state and all the countries of the socialist camp, and mainly the nuclear-missile weapons in the hands of the Soviet state."⁷ Writing the same year, Glagolev and Larionov declared that "the socialist countries...base their defense planning on the Soviet Union's nuclear might, which is a deterrent to the aggressive circles of the Western Powers."⁸ In 1964 Colonel Mareev insisted that

The available stockpiles of nuclear weapons and means for delivering them are more than enough to ensure our own national-defense needs and those of the entire socialist camp....

The USSR's nuclear-missile might...has played the main role in the fact that our motherland and the fraternal countries have not become a target of imperialist aggression....⁹

Claims in this vein, including some by high political personages, continued into the 1970s. According to an oft-quoted statement by Brezhnev,

We have created strategic forces that are a reliable means for detering any aggressor. And at any attempt on the part of anyone to ensure military superiority over the USSR, we will respond with the necessary increase in our military might, which will guarantee our defense....¹⁰

Another statement, by the Chairman of the Soviet Committee for European Security, A.P. Shitikov, has much the same thrust:

The defense might of the countries of the socialist commonwealth, whose reliable shield is the nuclear potential of the Soviet Union, has had and continues to have a deterrent influence on the aggressive circles of imperialism....¹¹

Deterrence Implications of Armed Forces' Ranking

To help determine the primacy of assured destruction or war-waging in Soviet deterrence calculations, it is of the utmost importance to compare the relative rankings of the branches of the armed forces within the military-policy "system of national defense" and within

the war-fighting "combat system of the armed forces." Soviet writers tell us that "the combat readiness of the armed forces...makes up the foundation of the defense capabilities of the state."¹² Nevertheless, these "combat capabilities of the armed forces" are not referred to as such when they come under the cognizance of the system of national defense. When viewed as an instrument of military policy rather than military strategy, they are designated, when combined with military-mobilization capabilities, as the state's "purely military potential" or "defense potential;"¹³ and this purely military or defense potential, when in turn aggregated with military-economic and military-scientific potentials and the potential contributed by political morale, goes to make up "state defense capabilities" or "national military might,"¹⁴ which are one and the same thing.¹⁵ However, the difference between the "combat capabilities of the armed forces" and the "purely military potential" in the hands of the state is, in the nuclear era, not simply terminological. If it were a matter of terminology alone, then we would expect to find the same rank order for the branches of the armed forces within the system of national defense as within the combat system of the armed forces. But this is most emphatically what we do not find.

The normal rank order for the branches of the armed forces, which is avowedly based upon their war-fighting capabilities ("combat might"), is as follows: Strategic Missile Troops; Ground Troops; National Air Defense Troops; Air Forces; Navy. In other words, two out of the three branches that have punitive strategic-strike potential -- the Air Forces and the Navy -- are at the bottom of the hierarchy, not the top.

To be sure, the theory has been advanced that this positioning is not the result of genuine ranking; since the "Soviet armed forces" are also referred to as "the Soviet Army and Navy," commentators, it is said, merely intend to list the four "Army" components and then the "Navy" component, without prejudice to their standing, or at least to the standing of the Navy. The theory reflects a shortness of historical memory. The Navy has not always been listed last. In discussing the period from the eve of World War II down to 1954, on those occasions when the Airborne and National Air Defense Troops were either genuinely independent branches or were loosely treated as if they were, the Navy has consistently been assigned third-place rank ahead of them.¹⁶

Nor has the ranking of the other branches remained the same since that time. In the first half of the

1960's, what appeared to be the more authoritative rankings placed the National Air Defense Troops second, after the newly formed Strategic Missile Troops but ahead of the Ground Troops, Air Force and Navy.¹⁷ It was only in the period around 1966-68 that the present rank-order became stabilized. The Strategic Missile Troops, as the "main branch" or "main component" of the armed forces,¹⁸ invariably come first. The Ground Troops, as a "most important" branch,¹⁹ now always come second, followed by the National Air Defense Troops, the Air Forces, and the Navy, overwhelmingly in that order. However, since each of these three latter branches are simply designated as "important,"²⁰ in contrast to "main" and "most important" status for the Missile and Ground Troops, respectively, one can occasionally find the Navy listed third or fourth as well as the usual fifth, and the same is true for the Air Forces and National Air Defense Troops.²¹ None of these deviations from the standard ranking can be attributed to institutional aggrandizement. I have never found a naval writer, for example, who has listed his service in other than last place, when the context was the "combat capabilities of the armed forces."

It is important to emphasize this, for the standard rank order is quite different in the "system of national defense". In 1968 Marshal Moskalenko was already declaring that "the strategic missile force, the nuclear submarine fleet and the strategic air force now hold the leading position in our entire system of defense."22

This thrusting of the three punitive strategic-strike components into the foreground of national-defense capabilities has continued down to the present day. Both in his series of journal articles in 1972-73 and in his 1976 book, Admiral Gorshkov, the Soviet Navy's Commander-in-Chief, pointed out that "the armed forces have always been one of the effective instruments of state policy," and that among the "main" means ensuring the motherland's high "defense capabilities," it was necessary to name "the Strategic Missile Troops and the Navy first of all," because they have "means of nuclear-weapons delivery of intercontinental range" for "punitive strikes in retribution" for aggression. He added immediately that the Air Forces, the Ground Troops and "other" branches of the armed forces, too, "are to a great extent instruments of deterrence."23

The presence of the Strategic Missile Troops at the top of both lists -- the "combat system of the armed forces" and the "system of national defense" -- is un-

derstandable. Because they are the "main" means for "defeating" the enemy, they are considered "the foundation of the combat might of the armed forces;" and because they are also a "main" means for "deterrence," they are considered "the foundation of national-defense might." The Navy, however, which is normally in last place in the context of "combat capabilities," enjoys second billing for its contribution to "national defense." This, too, is understandable. While the Navy's ballistic-missile submarines are no longer (since 1971) considered among the "main" means for "defeating" the enemy -- apparently because the Soviet countervalue option might not have to be used -- they are still, along with the Missile Troops, treated as a "main" means for "deterrence."²⁴ The Air Forces, normally fourth in the war-fighting order, are third in national defense, presumably on account of the greater contribution of Long-Range Aviation to punitive deterrence. The Ground Troops, however, slip badly in moving from the combat to the defense system, although the capacity of the tactical-nuclear weapons in their possession to inflict direct and collateral damage in an offensive does give them the edge in deterrence over the Air Defense Troops. While the latter are third in rank in the war-fighting system, their ability to inflict punitive destruction is

so meagre that they were not even specifically referred to by name in any of the above accounts of the system of national defense.

Soviet War-Prevention Doctrine

What conclusions can we draw from all this? The temptation is to infer that, in the eyes of the Soviet military-policy leadership, deterrence of nuclear war through the threat of using strategic-nuclear forces to inflict unacceptable damage not only takes precedence over securing political objectives through war, but also over preventing war through the confident claim of a capacity to fight and win it; and, indeed, in my last published thoughts on the matter, it was in this direction that I pointed the reader.²⁵ Now I am not so sure. For it seems that, pari passu with the narrowing of the political objectives of the system of national defense, there has been an infusion of political criteria into the combat system of the armed forces.

The politicization of the combat system of the armed forces, formerly (to all appearances) exclusively concerned with preparing for and waging the "armed struggle," comes out loud and clear in a recent work by the sophisticated military theoretician, A.A. Babakov:

The constant readiness of the Soviet armed forces to rebuff aggression has, in its historical significance, stepped outside the purely military framework and taken on a profound political meaning. It is a factor of the utmost importance in ensuring the development of socialism and communism, maintaining peace and preventing war. At the same time..., "troop combat readiness", L.I. Brezhnev has said, "is,...in the final analysis, the crown of troop combat skill in peacetime and the key to victory in war."²⁶

For a time, when I first began to come across statements with these political implications, I was able to brush them aside, irritated that the Russians were not being true to the logic of their own modes of discourse. I am still appalled at the logic, and cannot believe that it reflects anything more than intellectual opportunism (as opposed to a change in organizational jurisdiction). Nevertheless, among very knowledgeable authors when they seem to be aiming at precision, one cannot ignore the tendency to use the vocabulary of the combat system to convey the following notion: the value of the combat readiness or combat capabilities of the armed forces as a whole (and not just strategic nuclear forces) in "keeping the peace" and "preventing war" (as opposed to deterring world nuclear war), through a latent capacity to achieve "victory" in nuclear war (as opposed to inflicting ruin and destruction in a punitive retaliatory strike). The late Marshal Grechko, for ex-

ample, in extolling the Party's concern for raising the "combat might of the armed forces," said:

Their high combat readiness even now, in new historical conditions, serves as an important guarantee of peace and security on the planet, a guarantee that the creative labor of Soviet people will not be violated by any intrigues on the part of international imperialist forces.²⁷

On another occasion Grechko pointed out that "the greater the combat capability of the armed forces of our country, ... the more peace there will be on earth."²⁸

Grechko's successor as Minister of Defense, Marshal Ustinov, in an article with the suggestive title "Victory in the Name of Peace," continues in the same vein, although with looser terminology.

In the name of war prevention,...the party and Soviet people show tireless concern for strengthening the combat might of our armed forces.

Our armed forces are a reliable bulwark of peace in general. They are a powerful instrument for deterring the militaristic ambitions of reactionary circles. It is precisely for this reason that their combat readiness, which guarantees an immediate rebuff to the aggressor, is being constantly improved.²⁹

According to another set of authors:

While upholding the gains of socialist and communist development and the freedom and independence of their socialist fatherland, the armed forces...of the socialist countries stand out as an important factor for peace on earth. Therefore, further strengthening their might and raising their combat readiness responds to the interests of mankind as a whole.³⁰

We should always remember in this connection that the essence of the concept of "combat readiness" is to "always be prepared without delay...to engage any enemy and...succeed in achieving victory."³¹

The upshot seems to be two identifiable strands in Soviet thinking. There is the line represented by Mareev who, as we have seen, expresses confidence that the deterrence potential of the USSR's strategic forces is "more than enough" to satisfy national-defense needs. On the other hand, there is the line that wants to "prevent war" by being able to fight it, and is pessimistic about relying on what General-Major Talenskiy calls the "deterrent of fear." He agrees that

powerful nuclear-rocket weapons are decisive in helping to make the aggressor refrain from taking reckless steps. This fact, however, is not a guarantee of security, nor can it prevent a disastrous war from breaking out....³²

What is the explanation for this pessimism? The immediate culture-bound impulse is to test whether, as in the U.S. case, Muscovites are prepared to admit the value of assured destruction in deterring a deliberate all-out nuclear attack but, on the other hand, question its efficacy in warding off the full range of possible threats, from the conventional through the tactical-nuclear to the limited strategic-nuclear levels. And indeed, in this particular case, a naive ethnocentrism

does seem to have a handsome analytical payoff. Soviet spokesmen generally take a positive, if qualified,³³ approach to the "balance of terror" at the level of all-out nuclear war; the problem, as they portray it, is with American attempts to develop capabilities below that level and again make force a usable instrument of policy, both in the purely military and the politico-military senses. As a complement to deterrence -- not an alternative but a complement -- the military-policy and international-relations theorists advance one solution, the military-strategists another. There is no contradiction between the two approaches, only a division of labor.

The Arms Limitation Approach

In Moscow's international-relations journals, the focus is on arms limitation as a complement to assured destruction. As Talenskiy explained in his 1962 article quoted above, "The system of mutual containment by nuclear-rocket weapons, or the 'deterrent of fear,' far from stopping the armaments drive, makes it even more intensive."³⁴ Although he does not say so, other writers make clear that this is because of attempts to evade the imperatives of assured destruction through flexible response. Therefore, the pressure of world

opinion has to be brought to bear to curb Western initiatives in developing limited-war and strategic-defensive options, Moscow itself, of course, being entirely innocent of taking such initiatives. According to Mil'shteyn and Semeyko, writing in 1974,

the concept of "nuclear deterrence," which presupposes the availability of gigantic nuclear forces capable of "assured destruction," is not an ideal solution to the problem of peace and preventing a nuclear conflict. But the question is where to move from this concept which, according to a widespread opinion, reflected the actual state of affairs at a certain stage. One path is the path of ...arms limitations....

However, the facts testify that another path also has a lot of partisans (sometimes highly influential ones) in the U.S. -- to look for a way out of the situation of 'nuclear deterrence' that has taken shape by expanding nuclear weapons usability and finding ways that could supposedly obviate the catastrophic consequences of a nuclear conflict....³⁵

Both Arbatovs feel that this is indeed the point behind all Western limited-war concepts:

they have a single motive: how to break out of a strategic deadlock that makes attempts to use nuclear weapons suicidal.... This is not a new motive; the entire development of U.S. military thinking, as well as the development of new programs over the last 15-20 years, has gone on precisely along these lines....

Ever since the strengthening of the USSR's defense [oborona] put an end to hopes that a nuclear war was possible and safe for America, the military-industrial complex and its patrons in the U.S. have repeatedly tried to break the deadlock that has been established. They have created ever more improved strategic armaments,...but in our era the

way to security is not in the arms race...but...in ...arms limitation and disarmament.³⁶

It is not only strategic armaments in the flexible-response context that concern the Soviets, but also tactical-nuclear³⁷ and conventional ones. Thus, Proektor states:

Of course, it would be incorrect at this historical stage...to undervalue to any extent the balance in military forces that has taken shape between the USSR and the U.S., and between the Warsaw Pact Organization and NATO, as a factor deterring the aggressive tendencies in imperialism....

However,...a peace based on the "balance of terror" is doomed to end in a constant arms race and is no insurance against the danger of military conflicts arising....

First,...views are maturing in U.S. militaristic circles to the effect that further successes in the technology of nuclear weapons output allegedly could make its unilateral, limited ("selective") use entirely feasible without provoking general nuclear war.

Second,...the countries of Western Europe that belong to NATO are getting ready to produce new types of conventional weapons....³⁸

Soviet spokesmen are sometimes able to point to concrete examples of arms limitation agreements that not only serve to complement assured destruction but help to preserve its viability. Bovin recently stated:

It is hardly necessary to prove that the SALT II agreement fully corresponds with the national interests of the Soviet Union. It permits us to have strategic forces which reliably guarantee our security. And at the same time it strengthens control over the nuclear arms race, which also corres-

ponds with the interests of our country's security.

In this respect, according to Bovin, SALT II is in the spirit of SALT I, which prohibited the deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems. Without this prohibition, one side would have deployed, the other responded, and "as a result, instead of stability, there is a forced arms race...."

Thus since 1972...each side must reckon with the fact that he who decides on a first strike will have delivered against him a counter-strike which is unacceptable in its consequences. In other words, it is precisely the preservation of a retaliatory strike potential which is regarded as the best guarantee of security. This is that same balance of terror about which we have all read and heard and under which we live.³⁹

Bovin's reference to unacceptable consequences for "each side" does support Garthoff's view that, in the 1970s, Moscow has adopted mutual deterrence.⁴⁰ We will treat one possible explanation for this in our concluding remarks.

War-Waging as a Complement to Assured Destruction

Contrary to a widespread impression, military strategists and "military philosophers" in the USSR have the same positive attitude toward assured destruction as the international-relations theorists, when assured destruction is discussed in its proper context -- deterrence of

an all-out nuclear attack. According to General-Colonel Lomov, writing way back in 1962,

The present-day military doctrine of the United States of America is a reflection of the imperialist "position-of-strength" policy. At its core lies the ambition of American imperialism...to unleash a world nuclear war through a surprise attack on the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist camp. Not long ago President Kennedy openly declared that the United States, under certain circumstances, might take the initiative in a nuclear conflict with the Soviet Union....

In recent years,...a genuine revolution has taken place in military affairs....The mighty military technology in the hands of the Soviet state, primarily nuclear-missile weapons, stands out as the force deterring the aggressor....⁴¹

Glagolev and Larionov (the latter a military strategist) made much the same point in 1963:

In order to deal an instant nuclear counter-strike, the means of that strike must always be in a state of heightened readiness for action, and... it is precisely this capability of the Soviet Armed Forces that is now an important factor of Soviet defense might....

It is quite safe to say that an aggressor cannot now derive any economic or political advantages from nuclear war, for it merely puts the seal on his own destruction....The basic change in the world balance of forces and the new properties of the weapons at the disposal of the Soviet Union are a powerful deterrent to the unleashing of another war by the most aggressive circles of imperialism.⁴²

According to one collective of military strategists:

The military might of the Soviet Union, the availability of nuclear-missile weapons, has played the decisive role in the fact that the socialist and other peaceloving countries have not become targets of imperialist aggression. The Soviet

Union and other socialist countries, together with all the peaceloving states and peoples of the world, now have the might to block off the imperialist aggressors from unleashing a world thermonuclear war....⁴³

In Colonel Stavitskiy's view,

The Strategic Missile Troops...have become a powerful and awesome obstacle in the way of the imperialists executing their aggressive treacherous plans aimed at unleashing a new world war. They deter the imperialists from an attack on the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. The imperialists know that, if they try to unleash war against the socialist countries, the inevitable force of a retaliatory nuclear-missile strike will come down on them.⁴⁴

And here is General-Lieutenant Kalashnik:

As for the imperialists using nuclear weapons, they have refrained from doing this, not because these weapons have ceased to be instruments of their policy, but because of the clear threat of immediate retribution by the same kind of weapons....⁴⁵

But however sanguine the military strategists are of the potential of assured destruction for deterring all-out nuclear war, they are just as pessimistic as the international-relations theorists about its value in preventing conflicts below that level. On the other hand, unlike the international-relations theorists, who want to inhibit Western acquisition of a limited-war potential through arms limitations, the military strategists obviously feel the need, since the arms race is continuing, to offset Western capabilities at the conventional and tactical-nuclear levels by threatening es-

calation to the strategic-nuclear level, where the Soviet Union has to be prepared to fight and win.

True, analysis of these discussions is complicated by the fact that strategists do not always tell us how the war starts. Moreover, by a peculiar logic, they have no hesitation in representing a limited attack, since it will inevitably escalate, as a case of "unleashing world nuclear war." Still, in all the discussions encountered where the method of unleashing war could be determined with some confidence, the requirement to wage and win a nuclear war was always associated with conflicts initiated by the West below the all-out level.

According to General-Major Talenskiy, for example, writing in 1962:

In our epoch...it would be utopian to hope for some "reasonable" limitation of a military conflict....Any local armed conflict, capable of disturbing the tenuous stability of the present-day world, will inevitably lead to a world conflagration, either because of a prompt reaction on the part of one military bloc or another, or as a result of a logically developing chain reaction.

War has been and remains the ultimate form of coercion. The persistent striving for victory is an inherent law of all wars. For this reason neither side will stop at making still greater efforts and using still more powerful weapons to achieve victory or escape defeat....A modern war would inevitably assume global and total proportions with the use of the most powerful nuclear-rocket weapons as the predominant means of struggle, though theoretically it is possible to admit that at the be-

ginning the war would be of a limited nature as regards both area and weapons.⁴⁶

Marshal Rotmistrov, writing in 1963, was short, sweet and to the same point:

At the present time any military conflict is fraught with the danger of escalating to world warIt...will be waged until the enemy is completely defeated....⁴⁷

Then there is Colonel Shatalin:

Soviet military doctrine...considers that a future war, regardless of whether it arises from an attack of the imperialists on the countries of the socialist camp or as the result of the aggressors unleashing a local conflict that infringes on the vital interests of the socialist camp, will inevitably become a world war....

All this means that...the belligerent sides will set extremely decisive political and military objectives for themselves....The Communist Party ...warns the imperialists that, if they unleash war, they themselves will be consumed in its flames, since victory will be on the side of the forces of democracy and socialism....⁴⁸

And finally there is Marshal Zakharov:

The imperialist states joined together in the aggressive bloc of NATO are already planning to use tactical nuclear weapons at the very beginning of a war.

In the course of such a war, if it becomes a fact, the basic contradiction of the modern era -- the contradiction between socialism and capitalism -- will be resolved....⁴⁹

As can be seen from these quotations, Soviet strategists do not normally treat both assured destruction and war-waging in the same discussion so that the con-

trast and its explanation stand out. One of the exceptions was General-Major Zav'yalov, writing in 1970.

The colossal destructive power...of nuclear weapons, and U.S. possession of them initially as a monopoly, turned the heads of the ideologues of imperialism....The policy of dealing "from a position of strength" was officially proclaimed, and in the military sphere the "strategy of nuclear retaliation."

All this confronted the Soviet Union with the requirement to develop nuclear weapons and the means for applying them. The successes achieved in this sphere in the Soviet Union had a sobering effect on reactionary circles of the imperialist states, became a deterrent factor in the way of aggressive ambitions, and forced them to change their strategic concepts. Thus the "strategy of flexible response" saw the light of day....The "strategy of flexible response" envisaged a potential for unleashing war against the Warsaw Pact both with and without the use of nuclear weapons....

Under the circumstances, the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries had to strengthen their own defense capabilities and to keep their armies in a constant and high state of combat readiness.

As Comrade L.I. Brezhnev said in a speech...on October 2nd of this year, "We cannot avoid taking into consideration that the imperialists are continuing the arms race...."⁵⁰

We always have to remember in this connection that "combat readiness" is relevant to waging and winning war, not to deterring it through punitive strikes.

However, the most remarkable example of assured destruction and war-waging in a single interconnected discussion appears in a 1973 essay by Colonel Rybkin, a military philosopher at the Lenin Military-Political

Academy. Ever since his publication of a 1965 article, Rybkin has been notorious in the West as the proponent par excellence of victory in nuclear war at the expense of deterrence through assured destruction. Let me say at once that, in my view, full justice has not been done even to Rybkin's 1965 argument. His almost exclusive focus was on nuclear war as an instrument of policy; how the war would begin was accorded the briefest of treatments. Still, what he did say was not at all incompatible with the thrust we have reported for military strategists in general:

Possession by the USSR of nuclear weapons serves as a colossal factor detering an attempt by the imperialists to unleash a world war. However, ...in view of the continuous adventuristic actions of the imperialists, the danger has grown of the "automatic" initiation of war even as a consequence of an insignificant international conflict....⁵¹

Since "insignificant international conflicts" are not likely to start out with unrestricted nuclear strikes, it seems reasonable to interpret Rybkin as complementing assured destruction with victory, rather than counterposing the two.

But if Rybkin's 1965 treatment was too brief and elliptical to carry conviction one way or the other, the same cannot be said of his 1973 discussion, which is just about as explicit as a Soviet writer can be in a sensitive matter.

Equipping the Soviet armed forces with nuclear missiles has made inevitable a retaliatory strike on an aggressor determined to unleash a nuclear war.

As is known, in the past no country was able to neutralize the threat of aggression by a reciprocal threat to annihilate the aggressor. Of course, cases are known from history of war being prevented where aggressor countries, seeing an unfavorable correlation of forces, refrained from attacking, or where the intended victim turned out to have a powerful ally and so forth....But...an aggressor never ran into situations that threatened him with complete annihilation in short order. Moreover, even if a present-day aggressor calculates on successfully salvaging some part of his population and national wealth, the cost of aggression gets to be too high and is not justified by the objectives for which it was undertaken.

Thus, the first, highly important and positive socio-political consequence of the revolution in military affairs carried out in the socialist countries was the potential that had arisen for inevitable retribution against an aggressor....The impact of our military might, as a factor deterring aggression, harmonizes with the Soviet state's regular and unvarying foreign policy of peace....

However, one must take note of the circumstance that the military might of the countries of the socialist commonwealth is not to be regarded as a condition or a means for preventing all wars in general -- civil and national-liberation wars, and wars in defense of the sovereignty of peoples....

A substantial change in the characteristics, role and strategic content of local wars between states is also a special socio-political consequence of the revolution in military affairs. A grave feature of these wars is the ever-present threat of their transformation into limited-nuclear and then into world nuclear wars. The imperialists set limited objectives in such wars, taking into account the unavoidable dangerous consequences of all-out nuclear conflict. However, their strategy always allows for the possibility of a shift over to nuclear war....

The revolution in military affairs has brought forward complicated tasks for shaping the political morale and psychology of fighting men and the whole population for a possible nuclear war, and for increasing their readiness to repel the aggressor's attack and defeat him.⁵²

In short, in Rybkin's view a capacity for annihilating an opponent with strategic nuclear weapons, which is the central ingredient in Soviet national military (defense) might, is adequate for deterrence. However, assured destruction capabilities cannot -- and in some cases even should not -- prevent all wars in general. To prevent undesired limited conflicts, which have a high escalation potential, the Soviet armed forces and people have to be prepared to fight and win a nuclear war.

Conclusion

All this is admittedly pretty slippery stuff; and for much of it, the less said about the overt logic the better. However, the real logic of Soviet analysis is not always explicit. The reader himself must be at pains to develop it from the constant association of elements lying inertly side by side in numerous texts. Perhaps we have seen enough in this respect to at least assert the negative, i.e., deny that the Russians seem to be of one mind about the way to avoid war, whether

through assured destruction or a resolve on victory. Perhaps we can even go further and postulate, as an hypothesis for further exploration, a dualism in Moscow's thinking that may be complementary rather than contradictory or ambivalent -- deterrence for one scenario, war-prevention for others.

The differences that exist between U.S. and Soviet doctrine should not blind us to certain essential structural similarities. Both seem to recognize the efficacy of assured destruction in deterring a deliberate all-out nuclear attack; but both also appear to recognize the limitations of purely punitive threats in preventing conflicts or offsetting pressure below that level. Otherwise, the differences between U.S. and Soviet doctrines are admittedly glaring. I have all along suggested that these differences are due to perceived relative capabilities. Here, for reasons of space, I can only adumbrate my understanding of these perceptions and the logical development of positions from them by super-power decision-makers, reserving for a subsequent article the fuller discussion and documentation.

Under flexible response the U.S. was prepared in principle to develop capabilities at all levels, subject to some extent to Russian development initiatives; and because Washington was relatively comfortable with its

capabilities at lower rungs of the escalation ladder and did not contemplate having to escalate, it has for long been willing to acknowledge mutual deterrence. This is not to be attributed to humanitarian considerations or sentimentality, as some would have it. To thrust into the foreground one's own perceived strong option -- limited war, where technology and economic stamina count the most and the human costs of combat are lower -- and to dismiss as non-viable the opponent's preferred option -- all-out nuclear war -- was to present a front of strength. Mr. McNamara was in a much more credible position in feeling able to say in effect: I do not believe you will exercise your option, because I know I would not do so myself; we are both deterred.

Judged by declaratory evidence, on the other hand, the Russians have evidently never felt the same degree of assurance about their conventional and tactical-nuclear capabilities or, until the 1970's, their limited-strategic capabilities; on balance, it is difficult to give any other interpretation to Moscow's grim insistence on "inevitable escalation" to all-out war. If the Soviet Union perceived protracted conventional combat as its strong suit, it would hardly treat it as an evanescent option; and if it perceived that NATO would be the one that had to raise the ante, it would surely expect

Soviet assured-destruction capabilities to be just as effective in deterring escalation to general war as in deterring its initiation. The logical fit, therefore, is much better if we assume a perception on Moscow's part that the awesome burden of escalation would be on its own shoulders; then we could explain the Soviet refusal to acknowledge mutual deterrence and to admit that the damage the USSR was almost sure to receive in response would be "unacceptable." The threat of imposing equally intolerable costs has a credible ring as a retaliatory measure, when one has nothing more to lose, but the display of resolve necessary for threatening escalation to all-out war has to be based upon criteria that are radically asymmetrical in their implications -- defeat for one side, victory for the other, come what may and despite all trials.

To be sure, the situation has changed a good deal now that Moscow apparently perceives its options as having expanded. Regular Soviet doctrinal reviews seem to run in five-year spans, coinciding with the five-year plans;⁵³ and each planning period since 1960 has seen a major doctrinal innovation or the groundwork laid for one. In the first half of the 1960's Moscow evidently felt it had a single viable option -- all-out nuclear war -- that had to serve, as best it could, for

all contingencies: deterrence and war-prevention; coalition war in Europe and crises in the Third World. For 1966-70 a conventional local-war option was added, as backup for Moscow's new Third-World diplomacy of force.⁵⁴ For 1971-75 a limited intercontinental-strategic option was apparently introduced, involving initial counterforce strikes and countervalue withholding.⁵⁵ In 1976 theoreticians suddenly began to expound on theater nuclear war, involving both tactical-nuclear and Eurostrategic ("gray-area") systems, though it is unclear whether this has been actually adopted as an option or whether the way is being prepared for it, technically and psychologically.

Thus, the scheme behind Soviet military development just may be beginning to emerge in outline; the movement is from the top of the escalation ladder downwards, focusing on one rung at a time. And as the Soviet Union does move down, it is not surprising that, in the 1970's, we hear its spokesmen expressing greater faith in the symmetry and mutuality of the balance of terror. I do not think this should be construed as a sign of accommodation to Western values or one of the fruits of detente. Moscow has simply increased its military options and can more credibly pursue a greater range of political objectives; it is no longer restricted to

those life-and-death issues that alone warrant general war. The Kremlin's prognosis is still escalation to nuclear war, but the escalation "distance" is less -- to limited-strategic, possibly even theater-nuclear war, permitting the acknowledgment of mutual deterrence at the all-out level. And as the escalation distance diminishes for the USSR, notes of uncertainty sound increasingly in the American commitment to assured destruction, which had been unassailable in the 1960's as the central method for preventing nuclear war -- understandably so, when the only Soviet recourse in coalition war was massive countervalue destruction.

One cannot avoid the feeling that there is a rational foundation for these adjustments -- on both sides. If it does amount to convergence, it is probably not the kind we ought to count among our blessings.

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3. John Erickson, "The Chimera of Mutual Deterrence," Strategic Review, Vol. VI, No. 2 (Spring 1978), p. 11.
4. See my paper, "Military-Political Tasks of the Soviet Navy in War and Peace," in John Hardt and Herman Franssen (eds.), Soviet Oceans Development (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1976), pp. 197-202.
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 24. For the Missile Troops and Navy role in "detering" and "defeating" the enemy, see McConnell, op. cit., pp. 203-204. For treatments of the Missile Troops in terms of combat might, see Lototskiy et al., Armiya Sovetskaya, p. 420; I. Zheltikov, "The Soviet Armed Forces, Their Mission and Organization," KVS, No. 18, 1971, p. 65; A. Gribkov, "Reliable Shield of the Homeland," Leningradskaya Pravda, February 23, 1973, p. 2; V. Bondarenko, "Soviet Science and the Strengthening of National Defense," KVS, No. 18, 1974, p. 26; Grechko, Vooruzhennye Sily Sovetskogo gosudarstva (2nd ed., 1975), p. 102; M. Gareev, "Always on Guard Over the Gains of October," VIZ, No. 11, 1977, p. 23. For treatment of the Missile Troops in terms of national-defense might, see K.P. Kazakov, "Sword and Shield of the Soviet State," Sel'skaya zhizn', November 19, 1970, p. 2; I.S. Zheltikov et al. in Kozlov (ed.), Spravochnik ofitsera, pp. 127, 129; V.F. Tolubko, "Fire Shield of the Motherland," Pravda, November 19, 1977.
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